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NEW POEMS

NEW POEMS

BY
JOHN DRINKWATER



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I

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

*What should we do but sing his Praise
That led us through the wat'ry Maze, :
Unto an Isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?*

ANDREW MARVELL

TO
THOMAS HARDY

NEW POEMS

THE WITCH-BALL

[In some country places they hang up a blue glass ball as a charm against Witches.]

NEVER, oh, never came
Witch in this garden.
We would not pardon,
Would we, dear, anyone
Who should say things were done,
Such as in hell they name,
Here in our garden?
Never was poison-root
In this Hesperides
Girdled by gentle trees;
Mould that our lilies made
Mothered no nightshade;
Never passed Endor's foot
Over so smooth a green
Lawn as is laid between
Borders that virtue
Only can print,
Of pansies and mint,
With no herb to hurt you.
Here where the thrush and jay,

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

Robin and linnet,
Find through the longest day
Songs for each minute,
No path or plantation
Ever has heard
Vext incantation
With song of the bird;
Never a muttered spell
Learnt in the writ of hell,
Psalter obscene,
On warlock or witch's lip
Whispered in stewardship
Curst and unclean.
The day and the night
Are holy, all hours,
With heaven alight
Again in the flowers;
All blossoms by day
Flashing back to the sun
Many beams to repay
The succour of one;
All blossoms, when sweet
Stars of even have birth,
Lying orbed at our feet,
Pale planets of earth,
And, chaste beyond whisper
Of sorcerer's rune,
Moon-virgin when Hesper
Is lost in the moon.

THE WITCH-BALL

Go, comrade, go, lover,
Go pass through the portal,
Laugh and rest, till your mortal
Date falls as it must
To the gospel of dust,
And the dark wing shall cover
The sun from our portal.
Till then laugh and rest,
While the garden shall keep
All charms that are best
For fortune and sleep;
Clean rites to deliver
Roof-timber and stair
And hearthstone for ever
From plagues of the air.
No witch may come nearer
Than pass down the lane,
A fugitive peerer,
An impotent bane;
No kirtle of devil
May dip from the night,
Our lintel with evil
To brush in its flight.
Here melody lives,
The spirit burns purely,
And what the year gives
We harvest securely.
Still shall the blue witch-ball
Hang from the parlour-beam,

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

Catching the garden-gleam
Globed from the window-pane,
Marking our steps again
As in the room they fall;
A far little world of dream,
Still it shall hang by day,
Still it shall hang by night,
Just for the eye's delight,
Just as a story told,
Just as a fear of old,
Gathered away;
And never shall haunted
Breath cloud in the glass
The little enchanted
Long alleys of grass,
And birds of sweet lustres,
And gathering bees,
And blossoms in clusters,
And orcharded trees,
All mirrored in flame
From our acre of light,
Where witch never came
From fogs of the night.

EGYPT AND THE CROMWELL ROAD

A BEGGAR walked in front of me,
In ribboned rags, disastrously;

Mopping the puddled rain with pads
Long worn in guttered Iliads.

Halting, with eyes downcast, intent
Upon the splashing stones he went.

He heard me, and with lifted head
Waited my coming, as I said,

To ask an alms; but, as he turned,
His eyes with distant glory burned.

He did not ask an alms; he held
A finger up, and I was spelled.

He did not ask an alms; he said,
‘The ancient honours all are sped.

‘The ancient honours all are gone
That founded Rome and Babylon.

‘These rags were once Arabia’s boast;
I was a king, and am a ghost.

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

'The lifting of my hand was doom;
In Egypt they have found my tomb.'

He went, a beggar-man again,
Into the shadows and the rain.

CHRISTMAS EVE

ON Christmas Eve I lay abed,
With the still night more still
For all the pluming snows that spread
Along our sparkling hill;
And while again to Jesu' stall
Walked wisdom from afar,
I heard another shepherd call
Under the Christmas star.

Along the lane his carol came,
But not of Bethlehem;
A burning boy, he knew a flame
But not the flame of them:
'This Christmas Eve from courting home
I am a bachelor,
But soon the snows again will come,
And I'll be wed before.'

All one with kings from Bible-page,
And holy shepherds old,
Went yeoman love in pilgrimage
Across the Christmas wold.
'Good-will,' he sang, 'Good-will, Good-will,'
Or seemed to me to sing,
While some glad girl beyond the hill
Dreamt of a new-born king.

APPROACHING ELSINORE

To-morrow I shall be at Elsinore.
When by the Thames there was no song to sing
They say that he some time the buskin wore
In Denmark, and was Player to the King.
Of men the living habitation still,
The very stones and turrets I shall see
That he remembered once, and set the quill,
And the words came — ‘Who’s there?’ —
‘Nay, answer me.’
So Avon plied in royal usury,
Borrowed a scene and gave a world again,
Adding a tragic immortality
To the imperial story of the Dane,
That in all kingdoms now, for ever more,
Hourly the play begins at Elsinore.

NORTHWARD

INTO a bleaker day than we have known
All winter fallen on our London streets,
Belovéd, for a little while alone
I have stept where the north wind beats.

Is it the north? Is it the arctic chill,
Zones of the frosted night upon my mouth?
If you, belovéd, were beside me still,
Should I know the north from the south?

DISTANT MUSIC

FAR now from you, dear love, I know
How well you build from bow and strings,
Framing the melodies that flow
From your belovéd minstrel kings.

But now the strings are mute, your hands
Are still, the bow is laid aside:
I see you searching out the lands
Whence love beats back to you full-tide.

And standing so you are the birth
Of all the themes that you rewake;
Brahms and Beethoven bade the earth
Blossom in music for your sake.

Now falls your phrasing from afar,
Telling how they divined of old —
You cease, and on the moment are
The cause of all that you have told.

CONDITION

If one to love you better came,
The paradise within my heart
I would surrender to that flame,
And unlamenting would depart.

Till then undaunted I'll embrace
My fortune, asking no man's leave,
And pledge you in the market-place,
And wear your favour on my sleeve.

WHEN SLEEP DELAYS

WHEN sleep delays, yet thought is but a sorrow,

You come in your dear image of the day,
Name of my ease, redemption of the morrow,
My shepherd's way.

Sweet visiting ghost, all's well. My midnight now

All gentleness I'll keep till the sun's rising,
Knowing that then a dawn will bless my brow
Of your devising.

FELICITY

‘FELICITY, come stay awhile,
And talk with me, you pretty maid.’
She glanced at me, a girl of guile,
And she went running down the glade.

I stirred the embers on the stone,
I sprinkled rushes on the floor,
I took my pen to write alone, —
And she was tapping on the door.

HEED NOT THE BIDDING VOICES

HEED not the bidding voices,
O Poet, as you sing,
And as the bird rejoices
 Go yet on errant wing,
For the laurels of occasion
 Are bitter to the brow,
And the harvest of persuasion
 Is black upon the bough.

SIR EGLAMOUR'S FAREWELL

BECAUSE you bid me go, and set aside
All that our love had been,
The praise, the dedication of a bride,
The kingdom of a queen —

I go, too proud to question. But I'll wear
No favour riding forth —
All words of poor compassioning forbear —
Enough! I know my north.

A GHOST SPEAKS ON THE STYX

I could not think that Time was old,
So freshly did he wear
His colours as the years were told,
When I was walking there.

He knew no sad mortality
Of promise or regret,
Forever in virginity
Of joy Time's times were set.

Now on your river from the shades,
Boatman, a rumour comes
Of one whose garland never fades,
For all his martyrdoms.

They call him Love; they chant his rhyme
Even in Acheron;
They call him Love — but he and Time,
You ferryman, are one.

AN APPEAL FOR SAINT GEORGE'S HOSPITAL IN LONDON

THE PRESIDENT: H.R.H. PRINCE GEORGE

I

HARD here in London
I have seen
The first buds coming
Of April green,
In the dark tree
Of a London square
Have watched the nesting
Pigeons pair.

II

Saint George is a fighter,
His arm is fear
Where England's foemen
Lift the spear;
The dragons know him,
And men who die
For England, 'Saint George
For England!' cry.

III

But still as a child,
All joy and pity,
Little Saint George
In London city

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

Wanders alone,
And childlike stares
At pigeons building
In London squares.

IV

Great Saint George
With lance in hand
Guards all days
Our fatherland,
But little Saint George
Is charity,
He binds the wounds
Of the wounded; he
Says, ‘Sick man, sick man, take your ease,
Mend in sight of the London trees
Where pigeons mate and softly coo
As deep in the distant woods they do.’

V

Friends, who hold
Your wealth and peace
Because Saint George
Withouten cease
Touches your latch
Each night that falls,
And waits, and waits,
Till England calls —

SAINT GEORGE'S HOSPITAL

Because he stands
In your defence
All armed and bright
In diligence,
Remember, too,
The little Saint
Who asks your alms
For men who faint
Because the tumult
Drags and sears,
For hurt men crying
To him who hears,
To little Saint George
To give them ease
Where the pigeons build
In London trees.

VI

Great Saint George
Our name defend,
Little Saint George
Be pity's friend,
While we with George
The Prince have care
Of charity's house
Where the pigeons pair.

MISSOLONGHI, APRIL 19

1824-1924

WHEN song was worn, and misery was old,
And equal fellowship a fading theme,
The ardours of desire untimely cold,
Lonely in fame, unpurposed as a dream,
With every sharp and bitter savour tasted
Of love's unthrift and greedy widowhood,
With summer in miscounted winter wasted,
Seeking redemption the redeemer stood
Armed at the gates of Greece; to Greeks he
gave

Our west, a challenge, substance, his renown;
From Greeks he learnt a clarion cause, to save
Honour that, risen anew, to death went down
Lovely at last, for evermore to be
Whispered along the Cephalonian sea.

II

A hundred years are gone, and yet are near
The ebbing hours of that last pilgrimage,
And out of Missolonghi comes the clear
Shape of a sorrow that the Attic stage,
Divinely pitying pity so divine,
Had not disdained to crown with tragic song,

MISSOLONGHI, APRIL 19

Setting that larger continence to shine
Above the tale of unremembered wrong.
And still we need in our mortality
Such Attic vision on so fair an end,
That Byron still, no blemish more, may be
Friend of the Greeks, and of our England
 friend,
His penance done, his quarrels reconciled,
Knighthood at last of his immortal Childe.

ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THOMAS
HARDY'S *FAMOUS TRAGEDY OF THE*
QUEEN OF CORNWALL

Dorchester, November 30, 1923

LONG years ago on Cornish land
A King, his Queen, and her lover true
Lived out a luckless tale,
And the Breton maid surnamed White-
hand;
And ever the old years yet are new,
And the story does not fail.

It does not fail. Abroad in the south
Is news again of these that made
Love grieve in the dawn of time;
A poet has touched the dumb dead mouth
Of every one, and shade by shade
They steal upon his rhyme.

O luckless love of so little date;
O happy love so long to abide
For men to praise and weep;
O happy world where bitter fate
Is sweetened thus of all its pride
In song before we sleep.

AN ENTRY FOR EDMUND GOSSE'S LIBRARY CATALOGUE

'UNCUT. The Rare First Issue.' Let
Who will deride our tremulous
Fond joy when on our sheet we set
The latest of our honours thus.

We do not argue. But we know
Not vain the charms nor fugitive
That freshly from the numbers flow
When on their primal page they live.

Here is the gentle chronicle
Of all such virtues in your mind;
Yet here, for all we know it well,
One little book they shall not find.

It is of old affection writ,
Of courtesy that counted not
The severing years; the theme of it
Has never known design or plot.

'Mint copy. Perfect.' And when age —
(So the Great Printer shall I thank) —
From 'Finis' turns the final page,
We shall not find the verso blank.

1914-1918: THE DEAD SPEAK

In the earth, in the seas, we remember;
We dead, we are awake;
But bitterness we know not
Who died for beauty's sake;
We have no need of honour,
No quarrel we recall,
The lies, the little angers —
We have forgiven all.

In the earth, in the seas, we remember;
We dead, a myriad name;
But not among our legions
Is any word of blame;
We gave, and there an ending
Of covenants gone by,
We ask no funeral splendour
Who were content to die.

In the earth, in the seas, we remember;
We dead, your length of days;
But still the stealth of darkness
Makes one of all delays —
A year, or ten, or twenty,
How little then the cost —
Fear not, we have forgiven
The little years we lost.

THE DEAD SPEAK

In the earth, in the seas, we remember:
 We dead, your daily debt;
The old heartbreak is over,
 But we remember yet —
Is earth a sweeter temple
 Because we let you live?
Or do you still betray us,
 That we may not forgive?

WE MOTHERS KNOW

'PEACE,' they have said.

Though the sad profit of our pain
We grieve till time is gone,
We shall not learn to build again
The bricks of Babylon —
Our sons are dead.

Stilled are the guns.

Good-will, they say, shall heal, shall bless
The lands now, year by year —
But though the merciful possess
The earth, they shall not hear
Our little sons.

They were our friends;

Our thought, our breath, our blood we gave
To make them so;
They bought us peace, and in the grave
Is all the peace they know,
To make amends.

Leaders and lords,

Who in your pride decree that thus
Or thus shall scores be paid,
An age is building when with us
Your reckoning shall be made,
Who have no swords.

WE MOTHERS KNOW

We mothers know;
By the world's hearths we sit and dream;
Again we watch them die;
They willed the peace that you blaspheme,
And, though you still deny,
It shall be so.

TO A POET ON HIS EPITAPH FOR THE FALLEN

SPLENDIDLY dying, yet their fame
Had fallen to imperious time,
But for the living lips that came
To save their splendour in a rhyme.

THE HERESY OF AN ELDER ON NOT BELIEVING IN FAIRIES

I don't believe in fairies; —
I've something else to do,
Believing that behind the clouds
The sky is always blue,
That every day at half-past one
It's nearly half-past two.

I don't believe in fairies,
Because my Uncle James
Transcendentalised about them,
And told me of their games,
While he never saw the flying birds,
And didn't know their names.

I don't believe in fairies;
I think that lazy men
Who think the sunshine commonplace
Invented them, and then
Forgot that it is wonderful
That five and five make ten.

I saw the lambs at Whitsuntide,
And a bullfinch in a tree,
I saw a mushroom in the mist
And dolphins in the sea, —

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

I don't believe in fairies,
But these are faith for me.

Clear are the stars and the thrushes' eggs
For tidy hearts to find,
And I think that fays and lepracauns
Are slatterns of the mind,
And if I ever meet one
I shall know that I am blind.

THE ATOM OF GOD: A VISION

(TO G. C. D.)

SUPPOSE that God, being a busy God,
With myriad-million acres to be trod
Hourly in tending his vast globed estate,
Globe upon globe, convolved, immensurate,
Old crumbling worlds for pardon, or repair,
Or dissolution; new worlds on the air
Cooling from vapour, nebulous cores to bind
With solid zones; new balances to find
In his dominion where the long tides go
Of spheres through space in endless ebb and
flow,
Matter now locked, congealing, and now free
To range again fields of infinity;
New rhythms to win from the uncompassed
void,
New surmise in the task to be employed
Of moulding chaos, and setting with sure hand
Amid the multitudes of his command
The thing so moulded; say that, as he went,
This God so thronged with far omnipotent
Affairs, one æon'd morning, to fulfil
His starry missions, caught, as poets will,
A sudden brooding fancy of some far
Dim secret locked, unguessed, in every star
That knew him, nor revolted, yet, so played
God's fancy on the host that he had made,

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

Might own some law, some nature, that his
mind,
Rapt in creation, had not stayed to find,
Though he of all commanding had the source
Devised, the mass, the nature, and the course.
Intent upon his task, he let the mood
Go by, and still the labour was renewed
Of crowded mind on teeming circumstance,
And law to quell the mutinies of chance.
But when God rested, then the thought re-
turned,
And beat upon his mind, and something
burned
Of curious will to fathom what might be
Deep, deep in universal power. 'I see
World upon world obedient, as I bid
Cast in huge balance on my space, amid
Motion of worlds I yet must number, given
One time, one order, and one way through
heaven.
I set my seasons, fixt in their control
Of moving patterned light upon the whole
Body of being under me. I hear
Sweet sounds of mighty volume spun from
sphere
To axled sphere harmoniously scaled.
Beauty is ever with me, and unstaled.
And so my enterprise, my dreams of still
Process more proud to magnify my will,

THE ATOM OF GOD: A VISION

More song, worlds vaster, laws more excellent,
Numbers for my delighted government
Yet in their starry millions multiplied.
All this is well; I made it, and I guide
Its various motion, happy. But I leave
Too long one cause uncertain while I weave
My story out. This matter that I bring
Into so sure a shape and compassing,
What is it? How in central atom framed?
How built the energy that I have tamed
Into this chiming order? What the might
Gathered from swarming chaos to the light,
And infinitely banded to fulfil
The unbounded time of my creating will?’
Stars beckoned, and God’s speculation stayed.
But, pausing first, he lent a seven-day’d
Labour to fetch the answer that he sought
For this perplexed brief interval. He wrought
Earth, and the things of earth, and man; and
swung
This little globe appointedly among
The globes of his uncounted industry,
Declared its orbit, gendered it to be
Active and tided by the common flow
Of inescapable law, and, leaving so
This moment of invention universed
In destiny among the stars, he first
On man so moulded laid his bidding thus —
‘Go, child of God, in one thing prosperous,

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

That of my good, unveiled, purpose, one
Thing hidden is for your unveiling. Sun
And moon and friendly stars are with you set
For knowledge, and sweet climes and foliage
met

And fellowships for comfort on your way;
And that you shall not fail in sloth, this day
Have I made sorrow in your shadow, friend,
To keep you fresh in constancy, and lend
Ardour and indomitable power
To this your quest, my quest. Answer my
hour

Of speculation for me. Still, with mind
Established in the beauty you shall find
Aiding on earth, go on till all is told
Of this that even from me my atoms hold,
Secret, unmeasured.'

So, our fable tells,
The mood ordained when earth so dawned,
that dwells
Still at the centre of man's enterprise,
'Till all is told.' Not less than in God's eyes
The congregated systems of his plan,
Is earth dominioned mightily to man.
And as God's vision broods upon the whole
Design innumerably spread, the soul
Of man is rapt upon the earth that glides,
His habitation, through the stellar tides.
Nor is man's bounded consecration less

THE ATOM OF GOD: A VISION

Than God's unbounded. And as all things confess

Through firmamental space God's mastery
In moulding, so man fixes his decree
On grain and mass and season and sap of
earth,

Framing fresh lovely argosies from birth
Till death; great bridges flung astride
Loud waters; swift and lonely ships to ride
Waste oceans, towers and bells, altars and
tombs,

Engines of flight, and wheels, and windowed
rooms

With hearths, and beds, and beams — all at
his will

Shaping from forge and crucible and mill,
Matter no less commanded than by God.
And as the long and difficult paths are trod
Of all his labour, ever, for a sign
Of his dominion, on his annals shine,
All pure, all uncommitted, things of art:
Music and verse; orisons of the heart
Figured in stone and marble; shapes that
sing,

Dropt from the brush, their coloured gospel-
ling.

And grief, and loss, and doubt, and bitter
change

Are with him, that his purpose shall not range

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

In mere delight irresolute, content
To fade from thought into an indolent
Drifting of nebulous mood; and still to keep
His diligence firm, establisht, he must reap
His patient year, nursed on to festival,
Or to his body's shame untimely fall.

So labours man, and even as God compels
His starry textures, man the master dwells
On earth, compelling also in his kind.
But as that fleeting fancy of God's mind
In the beginning of man was fixt to be
In man his urge, his aim, his constancy,
So ever in his faring as he goes,
Unwearied in discovery, he knows
One fierce complaining clarion of desire,
One siege unresting; moulding earth and fire,
Leading the waters, harnessing the wind,
Bringing the unperceived, the undefined,
To scale and measurement, he seeks, he seeks
The last arcanum; still the challenge speaks
Over the vast of years, and still he broods,
Not as God, walking in his solitudes,
A moment, once, but age by kindling age,
Unceasing, incorruptible, his wage
But lonely consecrations of the soul —
Crying, 'This heat, this might that I control,
This matter that I bind, this fluid speed
Obedient to my rod, this planted seed
That knows my husbandry, this blood and bone

THE ATOM OF GOD: A VISION

That of my generation come and own
My governance of spirit — what are these?
What life in the far central fastnesses
Lies poised in huge momentum? What the
word,

The touch, the lodestar of release? Come, gird
Your resolution, Man, on with the quest,
Your quest, of God's commanding.'

Manifest

Little by little on the ages grew
The knowledge of man's dedication. New
Process on process dwindled or prevailed.
Old alchemies went by, old prophets failed,
Old revelation to denial bowed,
While patient and undaunted still the proud
Brain to its last fulfilment laboured on,
Fulfilment and unfolding. Æons gone,
And æons, came the long, the appointed day;
God's thought, arrested on his starry way,
A moment earthward turned, and there beheld
Man's lifted finger fall, and from the cell'd
Centre of being strike the primal beam;
And, sounding through the universe, a gleam
Shot volted, blinding all the multitude
Of stars, that even God trembled where he
stood,
As the unfolded mystery, divined
Of man, was gathered to the eternal mind.

FROM AN UNKNOWN ISLE

And where earth was, now, drifting into space,
A smear of dust was all. God turned his face,
And moved again creating, through the wide
Realms of almighty purpose, satisfied.

So runs the fable out. The hearth is cold,
The lamp is flickering with our story told,
The candle on the stair calls us to sleep,
To-morrow shall have other tales to keep.
Let dreams be as they may, the dawn will
bring

Again the bright, the happy birds to sing,
Fresh flowers unfolded, friendship at the gate,
Old faith for pilot on the tides of fate.

II
FROM THE GERMAN

TO
D.
I. R.
E. R.

NOTE

THESE verses were the footing I paid for a summer holiday in Southern Germany, when for the first time I found in being the towns of the fairy-tales, one of the literary forms in which the modern world seeks in vain to rival the old. Also, in Stuttgart and Heidelberg and Frankfort and Marbach I was in the land that gave birth to much of the best German poetry. This, in mere carelessness, I had always vaguely supposed to be eloquent and rather heavily thoughtful, such as the French critic had in mind when he said that thoughtful poetry didn't make him think, it made him sweat. Now, under friendly guidance, I discovered how mistaken I was; that the German lyric, even when it is on a philosophical errand, can move with as light and distinguished a grace as any French *madame* or English cavalier. The German muse, in short, was the very companion for holiday humour, and made a very agreeable fifth to our party of two Australians, an Austrian and an Englishman.

The friendly guide was Dr. Eduard Reichmann, who would read a German poem over to me and explain it, until I had got its sense and sound into my mind. If I then found it attractive for my purpose, he would supply me with

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a word for word translation, I being careful not to let him exploit his knowledge of English too freely, being anxious to get from him nothing but crude pointers, leaving the search for exact words until I was writing my verses. After the literal meaning had been made clear, we worked over the precise metrical form, and then I was left to myself. The principles I worked on were these:

A translation of a poem should, it seems to me, have one clear aim; to produce such a work as the original poet would have written in the same mood and with the same thought if his language had been that of the translator's purpose instead of his own. Above all, the translation of a poem should be a poem.

First, as to the content matter. Clearly, the essential significance of this must be preserved; clearly, also, this significance must be presented by the same general device as is employed in the original. But the detail of this device may, it seems to me, sometimes be modified without offence. For example, in Uhland's lovely little masterpiece of witty sentiment, the literal meaning of the German in my third line of the second stanza is, 'No-one bit my cheeks.' Liberties of this kind as to the sense of the poems I have allowed myself, but no others that I am aware of; beyond an

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occasional redistribution of the meaning into different lines of a poem, as in Goethe's 'Wanderer's Night Song,' where the sense of my first four lines covers that of the first five of the original, and of my last four lines that of the last three of the original. These renderings mean poetically, I believe, precisely in English what their models mean in German, but I have made no concessions to the pedantry that greets every translation of the classics, for example, with an exhibition of classic nonsense.

Secondly, as to the form. I have nothing here to do with the angry problem of matching languages that have radically different metrical geniuses. I have not to decide, as Pope had, whether the proper English equivalent for Homeric hexameters is blank verse; though I think he was right. The forms of German verse correspond for the most part with our own. I think that once or twice I have substituted one common arrangement of line length for another, which I could do without apology, since every poet knows that his choice between one and another of these is more often than not arbitrary. Also I have discarded the German light ending rhymes when it was convenient, because the natural practice of German in this matter becomes tiresome if freely indulged in English; moreover, their light ending is not the

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same thing as ours. But I have generally been scrupulous as to the reproduction of form, as of meaning; and particularly so when the form is unusual and closely personal, as in the Goethe piece already mentioned and Eduard Mörike's intricate philosophical lyrics.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from giving myself the pleasure of saying that Dr. von Hofmannsthal, who is the only living poet represented in this little collection, and who knows English with almost idiomatic intimacy, has been generous enough to give a more than cordial approval to my version of his poem, and leave to use it as I like.

PRELUDE. THE POET

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER

(1759-1805)

STILL fragrant of the spring for ever,
While times and generations fade,
The wreath of laureate endeavour
Blooms in the song the initiate poet has
made;
Ancestral virtue still unsleeping
He tends for kingdoms yet to be,
And incorruptibly is keeping
The gates of immortality;
And through the poet still is given
The rarest recompense of heaven.

SPRING

JOHANN CHRISTIAN GÜNTHER
(1695-1723)

Shy little one, Elysium's here,
So rest; the west wind in the lime
Is musical; no care is near
These woods and meadows of the prime;
Where garlands of our solitude
Back to the pebbled water sing
No peering malice may intrude
Upon the happy rites of spring.

Your discipline of cloistered youth,
The virgin promise of your breast,
Are pretty snares whereby in truth
I am love's minion confessed;
Fear not the touch of my desire,
But in your bosom let it play,
Till you, sweet novice, shall aspire
To yet more absolute a sway.

Why is the colour in your cheeks?
Nay, nay, I wrong you not, I swear;
Love has his paradise, and seeks
Your innocence and beauty there;
In faith, your captive though I be,
Follow my wit, and you shall find

SPRING

How prodigal a lord is he
In resolution to be kind.

The earth is all fertility,
Her paramours your doctrines are,
Your parables to profit by,
How love is joy's familiar;
Why are we met beneath our lime?
How was the purpose of our birth?
Who tells the processes of time
Elected us for lover's mirth;

BELINDA

JOHANN LUDWIG WILHELM GLEIM
(1719-1803)

THE last seduction of her dress
Was loosed. Behold! Belinda's maiden treas-
ure
Naked and lovely to the breezes' pleasure,
Refiguring Ida's wantonness.

Ah me, from that divine caress,
My sudden joy, my tribulation's leisure,
From all that secret loveliness,
My term of Eden's torment must I measure.

Weak with desire, bemused, (ah, woe to hear!)
In one bright summer noon of admiration
I took the wage of many a wrathful year.
You that a little care for your salvation,
Never (alas! I tell you) let the dear
The fatal venom be your youth's temptation.

ROSETTE

HEINRICH CHRISTIAN BOIE
(1744-1806)

STILL upon her glances waiting,
Still desiring, supplicating,
Vainly to Rosette I plead —
‘Must I in eternal trial
Know the fury of denial?
Pity my so constant need!’

Still austere, still unbending,
Nothing my occasion mending,
Cold and fair Rosette replies —
‘I would clasp in sweet submission,
But that hope is love’s condition,
And in conquest passion dies.’

MY CHASTE MISTRESS

AUGUST BÜRGER
(1748-1794)

WHEN I too sweet an ardour press
Upon my saint's condition,
So pitiful is her distress,
I straight am all contrition.

If suddenly within me move
The angels of temptation,
She tells me lust is lack of love
And weeps for my salvation.

So in the difference of kind
Our young delight must smother —
O Love, some sweet conversion find
At least of one or t'other.

Hereafter my desires be cold
With saints and gospel-spinners,
Or let the time in her behold
Its paragon of sinners.

WANDERER'S NIGHT SONG

JOHANN WOLFGANG GOETHE
(1749-1832)

PEACE, on the hills forsaken,
Is deep;
The leaves unshaken
Are asleep;
By twilit nest
Stilled is the wood-bird's tune;
Hush, heart! You soon,
You, too, shall rest.

DEPARTURE ..

LUDWIG UHLAND
(1787-1862)

So am I from the town departed
Where long it was my lot to dwell,
And I am on my way stout-hearted
Though none were met to say farewell.

No surging crowd with fond caresses
Has torn (thank God) the coat I wear,
Nor are my lips bruised by the kisses
Of inconsolable despair.

The townsmen did not turn in sleeping
As I went out at crack of day —
Well, let them damn well sleep — my
weeping
Is but for one who stayed away.

TO HIS ABSENT MISTRESS

NIKOLAUS LENAU
(1802-1850)

THIS rose I pluck in exile, dear,
Ah, would that I might be
But now the happy messenger
To carry it to thee.

But ere my zealous touch were laid
Upon thy latchet far,
My little gathered rose would fade,
For thus the roses are.

Alas, that any lover knows
A wearier way to meet,
Than he might bear a gathered rose
Still virginal and sweet,—

Than for her sprigs the nightingale
Goes on her nesting flight,
Or sends upon the wind her tale
Of sorrow through the night.

THE NEW LOVE

EDUARD MÖRIKE
(1804-1875)

Is man unto another wholly given,
Though man should will it so?
In watchful nights I sought the word, and still
the word was no.

By none possessed, and as a stranger driven
From hearts I could not know —
Lamenting thus, a sudden sign was on my lips,
and lo!

I said, ‘May God and I not go,
In daily tenderness to grow,
As lovers from this moment even?’

Ah! fearful joy to gather, and bestow, —
A waif of love no more to travel to and fro,
But walk with God on earth, foretasting
heaven.

PRAYER

EDUARD MÖRIKE
(1804-1875)

LORD, as thou wilt, bestow,
Light ease or heavy bearing,
Still shall my day be sharing
Thy bounty's overflow.

Thy mercy oppress me;
Thy temperance bless me;
Lord, sternly or sweetly,
Employ me discreetly,
That peace may possess me.

THE LAST TREE

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL
(1813-1863)

On heaven's rim, when day is done,
 There is a lone last tree,
That gathers from the setting sun
 A morning memory.

And when at night my dues I pay
 For sunny hours, I find
The tree that held the dying day
 Transfigured in my mind.

So you renew my glory gone,
 And as I turn to age
My youth in you sets out upon
 Eternal pilgrimage.

TO HIS DEAD WIFE

THEODOR STORM

(1817-1888)

HERE is too black a grief for bearing,
That still the sun makes golden time,
And day to night is still a-wearing,
That as when you with us were faring
The clocks tick and the steeples chime;

That when the candle-time is here
We gather still in household grace,
And nothing seems to miss you, dear,
Though where you sat so many a year
Another chair is in the place;

While I know the moon is weaving
Now her thin and lonely beams
To the vault of my bereaving,
Desolate, as is my grieving,
On a tomb of ghostly dreams.

A WOMAN'S HAND

THEODOR STORM

(1817-1888)

NEVER, I know, complaining word
 Will soil your lips of stedfastness,
But what so bravely is unheard,
 Your hand in silence will confess;

Your hand, poor witness of your pain,
 Its fragile motion telling me
Of weary nights when it has lain
 Upon your heart's adversity.

HEART'S PROVING

GOTTFRIED KELLER
(1819-1890)

Do not my undesigning heart disdain
That it so many hearts has fellowed,
In this it is but as a fiddle mellowed
Long by a master in desire and pain;

And year by year under his cunning hand
Its common price has interest taken,
For now the strings to deeper tones will
waken
For any player who may understand.

So, many a mistress on my heart has spent
Instruction of her fancy's choosing,
Till it is worthy your diviner using —
Fail not its music to our discontent.

CONTENT WAS FULL

DETLEV VON LILIENCRON
(1844-1909)

WHEN softly to my arms you came,
Your even pulse unbroken,
Till on your sleeping lips my name
In sunny peace was spoken,
Content was full.

And when at eve you snared away
My discontent and sorrow,
While I within your bosom lay,
All guarded from the morrow,
Content was full.

SONG

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL
(b. 1874)

My lady said, 'I'll be no chain,
 You are not sworn to me,
To pledge the faith of men is vain,
 They are inconstancy.'

'My friend, go on your way,' she said,
 'Divining many a land,
Taking your ease in many a bed,
 Caressing many a hand.'

'If bitter wine your cup may fill,
 Then try the Malvoisie,
But if my lips are sweeter still,'
 She said, 'come back to me.'

EPILOGUE: THE GERMAN MUSE

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER
(1759-1805)

HERE no age Augustan flourished,
No Medician bounty nourished
Children of the German muse;
Still by privilege unfriended
Her unfolding flower was tended
By no princely beams or dews.

In the pride of German story
See her, scant of wage or glory,
Turning from great Frederick's throne;
So the German muse may pride her —
When the sceptred world denied her.
By her soul she sang alone.

Mounting thence a higher passion,
Tided in a deeper fashion,
Sweeps the German muse along,
And singing that she may inherit
But her own abundant spirit,
Mocks the servitude of song.

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